

SIDEBAR – to Elections story

Violence erupted Saturday outside the city's government building as 4th Infantry Division Commander, Maj. Gen. Raymond Odierno and 173rd Airborne Brigade Commander, Col. William Mayville announced their intention to hold mayoral elections next week.

Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry briefly exchanged gunfire with unknown assailants in a vehicle. In addition to the gunfire, an Arab man was shot in the leg when he demonstrated violent intent with a knife.

According to the unit's situation reports, approximately 100 Arabs gathered in the vicinity of the building in an apparent demonstration of unknown intent. An unknown number of them were armed with swords and knives.

The soldiers took the wounded man to a local hospital for treatment. No U.S. or Iraqi forces were reported injured in the incident.

Events of a similar nature were reported throughout the city.

A man was apprehended after firing an AK-47 assault rifle from a rooftop in the vicinity of a riot. At the Kirkuk Military Airfield a burst of AK-47 fire was reported and was followed by another attack at a gate. Soldiers at the gate came under fire from two vehicles that quickly fled the scene.

No U.S. soldiers were reported injured in any of the incidents.

Soldiers from the 173rd Abn Bde have been stationed in and around Kirkuk for several weeks and are working with the local population to help restore order and basic services. Today marked the first time that wide-spread violence of this nature affected the city since the brigade arrived.